

2. (Twice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of lift units includes load support members and, respectively, the support bed includes mating members for locking the support bed to the lift units at least for the duration of a lifting operation.

3. (Thrice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said load support members and said mating members are provided with interlocking mating shapes.

4. (Thrice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said support members is provided with a protruding part forming an angle with the horizontal plane during the lifting operation.

5. (Four Times Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said lift units is actuated by two drive shafts driving a plurality of lift elements, said plurality of lift elements being a plurality of lift chains, and wherein said drive shafts are arranged to be driven by at least one drive unit equipped with a variable-frequency inverter and an angular pulse encoder or a similar position transducer.

6. (Thrice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said lift units are equipped with at least one drive unit, and when the number of drive units is larger than one, the first one of said drive units is a so-called master drive unit, and the others are so-called slave drive units.

7. (Twice Amended) A support bed according to claim 1, wherein at least two opposite edges of the support bed are provided with mating members capable of locking said support members of said lift units to said support bed.

8. (Twice Amended) A support bed according to claim 1, wherein said mating members of said support bed are formed by bracket edges slanted downward by an angle from the horizontal plane.

9. (Twice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said load support members and said mating members are provided with interlocking mating shapes.

10. (Twice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein each said support member is provided with a protruding part forming an angle with the horizontal plane during the lifting operation.

11. (Twice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said each support member is provided with a protruding part forming an angle with the horizontal plane during the lifting operation.

12. (Thrice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein each of said lift units is actuated by two drive shafts driving a plurality of lift elements, and said drive shafts

are arranged to be driven by a drive unit equipped with a variable-frequency inverter and an angular pulse encoder or a similar position transducer.

13. (Thrice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein each of said lift units is actuated by two drive shafts driving a plurality of lift elements, and said drive shafts are arranged to be driven by a drive unit equipped with a variable-frequency inverter and an angular pulse encoder or a similar position transducer.

14. (Thrice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein each of said lift units is actuated by two drive shafts driving a plurality of lift elements, and said drive shafts are arranged to be driven by a drive unit equipped with a variable-frequency inverter and an angular pulse encoder or a similar position transducer.

15. (Twice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said lift units are equipped with at least one drive unit, and when the number of said drive units is larger than one, the first one of said drive units is a so-called master drive unit and the others are so-called slave drive units.

16. (Twice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said lift units are equipped with at least one drive unit, and when the number of said drive units is larger than one, the first one of said drive units is a so-called master drive unit and the others are so-called slave drive units.

17. (Twice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said lift units are equipped with at least one drive unit, and when the number of said drive units is larger than one, the first one of said drive units is a so-called master drive unit and the others are so-called slave drive units.

18. (Twice Amended) An apparatus according to claim 5, wherein when the number of said drive units is larger than one, the first one of said drive units is a so-called master drive unit and the others are so-called slave drive units.

19. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of lift elements is a plurality of lift chains.

20. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the lift units further comprises roller members adapted to run on columnar legs.

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